

HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 15, 2009

Budget Committee Members Present

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman
Michael Plouffe, Vice-Chairman
Jerry Znoj, Selectman Representative
Charlotte "Peppa" Ring, School Board Representative
June White, Precinct Representative
Pat Collins
Victor DeMarco
Dick Hansen
Brian Lapham
Eileen Latimer
Jack Lessard
Michael Pierce
Richard Reniere
Larry Stuker
Peter Traynor

Chairman Woolsey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Chairman Woolsey introduced the members of the Committee.

Approval of Minutes of June 16, 2009

Moved by Mr. Plouffe, seconded by Mr. Stuker, to approve the Minutes of June 16, 2009.

Vote: 13 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions (Ring, White). Motion passed.

Chairman Woolsey said School Board Representative Peppa Ring will relay concerns of the Budget Committee to the School Board.

Chairman Woolsey asked Ms. Ring if she had any personal concerns regarding the school budget. Ms. Ring said she did not.

Peter Traynor said the question had been asked last year whether the K through 8 levels in SAU21 were on the same learning levels at the same time. The Superintendent said they were. Now we know this is not the case. Mr. Traynor said he wanted to speak about accountabilities. Students are not reading at the proper levels. What is being done about this? The Town is paying large sums of money on

education. What is different from other towns who are scoring better? Mr. Traynor said he felt the Superintendent owes an explanation.

Chairman Woolsey asked if anyone had done a study on the difference between the towns. Mr. Traynor said he had asked this question last year and the Superintendent had said they were doing a study.

Mr. Pierce said the Winnacunnet School Board had a meeting and discussed a plan called The 180 Program. This is for the 40% coming into Winnacunnet who are below grade level. They said they have had some success with this program.

Mr. Collins said it was up to the Superintendent to answer these questions.

Mr. Traynor asked what was being done to help students who need help. There is a lot of federal money for Special Needs. Mr. Traynor asked if some of that money could be used for this problem.

Chairman Woolsey said that the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent can be invited to the October meeting to discuss these concerns.

Mr. Pierce said every year money has been left over in the school budget which should be returned to the taxpayers. Chairman Woolsey said this does go back to the taxpayers.

Mr. Pierce said he was concerned about a significant payoff in a recent court case. Chairman Woolsey said that was a private settlement. Mr. Pierce replied that it was taxpayer money. Mr. Collins said he did not think it was wise to pursue this matter at this meeting.

Chairman Woolsey said at the time the Board of Selectmen removed Town Manager Reisberg there was a settlement negotiated between the counsel for the Selectmen and the counsel for the Manager. The agreement stated there would be a payout which there was and that there would be no further discussion. News media and some others took the matter to court. As Board members no discussion was allowed because of possible repercussions. The suit was successful and then the members could speak. In other words, you have to be careful until you have a specific ruling from the court. There is a legal budget and that is what it is for.

Mr. Stuker asked about student-teacher ratios. He asked what needs to be done from a Budget Committee perspective about this. Last year there was the incident where teachers were fired and then brought back. The Committee was not pre-

warned about this. There should be a framework of communication established to avoid this happening again. Ms. Ring said this was one of the School Board's goals. Communication is crucial.

Chairman Woolsey said the Budget Committee had thought the School Board was comfortable and it would have helped if someone had said adjustments would be coming. Better communication is important.

Mr. DeMarco said he would like to be provided with the dollar figure that was remaining in the budget at the end of the year. He said he would like to know what line items it came from and what was done with the excess money. Mr. DeMarco said he would like that money to simply be returned. Ms. Ring said she believed the money was spent on technology. Chairman Woolsey asked Ms. Ring to provide printouts on this to the Budget Committee.

Ms. Latimer said that it was important to know if the extra money spent at the end of the year had been part of the original budget or if it was just added on.

Chairman Woolsey said technically you cannot spend money on something the public wasn't warned about. Chairman Woolsey said the school budget will be presented on December 15. She asked Ms. Ring to get the request to the Budget Committee at least one week beforehand for review.

Mr. Znoj asked about the extra planning period being given to teachers and how many teachers this affects. Ms. Ring said this is being done at only one school. Mr. Znoj said he does not feel this is productive.

Selectman's Report

Jerry Znoj said that August results show the Town to be \$1.5 million under budget on an annualized basis. It will not end up at that amount of course, but it is a good position to be in at this time.

Chairman Woolsey asked about the spiking charge. Mr. Znoj said that had been put in the budget but there will not be an impact when the tax rate is set in October. The Selectmen feel there will not be a raise in the tax rate and hope the budget for 2010 is less than 2009.

Chairman Woolsey asked if estimated revenues have been discussed by the Selectmen. Mr. Znoj said not at this time.

Mr. Znoj said mandatory recycling is coming up. Chairman Woolsey said aggressive recycling extends the life of the landfill and this saves money.

Mr. Znoj said the Selectmen are also working on trimming overtime in 2010. The Police Chief has also been asked to examine the mounted patrol and its costs and whether that money might be put to a better use. Safety issues are also being worked on by Chief Silver and Chief Sullivan.

Eileen Latimer discussed the emergency management situation. She said she was happy that the Selectmen were moving forward on some sort of a plan, but it has been 10 months since the ice storm and a plan still is not complete.

Mr. Lapham asked if anything has been learned about the supply overruns. Mr. Znoj said they are continuing to look into this matter.

Mr. DeMarco said he is quite concerned about the number of part-time officers in the Police Department. The number is now down to 40%. Another four or five will be lost soon and the department will soon be down to 30%. It is necessary to find out how part-time officers can be attracted who will stay.

Precinct Report

June White said the Precinct is trying to extend the season at the beach. A Harvest Moon Festival is planned for Columbus Day weekend. There will be a beer tent, arts and crafts, fireworks, a Parade of Boats. A lot of businesses have agreed to stay open for this weekend. There will be a DJ at the Seashell until the end of the month.

Old Business

Mr. Traynor mentioned the new pumper that was turned down. The old one is now inoperable. He asked if this was going to be a warrant article. He said this problem could affect insurance rates. Chairman Woolsey said this would be discussed at the October meeting.

New Business

There was no New Business.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 20, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. At that time the Committee will meet with representatives from the school and the Town.

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Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Lessard **moved**, seconded by Mr. Stuker, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice
Secretary

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman